Like most Martha Wells books, it's got some good points: Funny characters...

...

...well actually I can't really think of any other good points at the moment besides it's funny sometimes.

Martha Wells' ableism is on full display with this book, because we start out, as anyone who's read the summary probably knows, with our protagonist, Tremaine, planning her own suicide.

As we read the book, we learn all the various traumas she's been through. It would be a wonder for her to have survived everything she's gone through without

developing a mental illness, not just from her childhood, but the war she's living through at the moment.

So it seems like this story will, at least in part, be dealing with depression and how to cope with suicidal ideation and the traumas that this character has gone through...

Except no, because Tremaine's depression is magically cured before the book is halfway over, and stays magically cured forever. It apparently wasn't even "real" depression to begin with, it was caused by magic, and just stops being a thing.

It's literally just there for cheap drama to make you think this story cares about mental illness and the people who suffer from it, and then is thrown away

the moment it's done its job of luring you in and making you think this story is gonna have stakes.

Once you've read enough of Martha Wells' books to see the constant, glaring faults in her ideas, they're impossible to miss. I should have known she would magically cure depression the same way she magically cures every physical injury any one of her other characters ever gets.

Not only is it bad, lazy writing, it's ableist as crap and completely disrespectful to disabled and mentally ill people. We exist in real life, and we deserve to see ourselves in fiction. Not just used a cheap drama to bait people in, only for it to be magically cured once the "drama" is no longer needed.

This book is funny, and has some interesting ideas. But the laziness and the ableism of the writing choices that she just keeps making over and over again really put a damper on the fun.

Add in the fact that, depsite the fact that this is supposed to be a standalone series, she keeps mentioning events that happened in the past that make me feel like I’m missing something, like there were other books I was supposed to have read first. And I know there are other books set in this universe, but if this trilogy is meant to stand on its own, then I shouldn’t constantly feel like I’ve missed out on something. That’s not how standalone series are supposed to work, especially not for the first book in a trilogy.